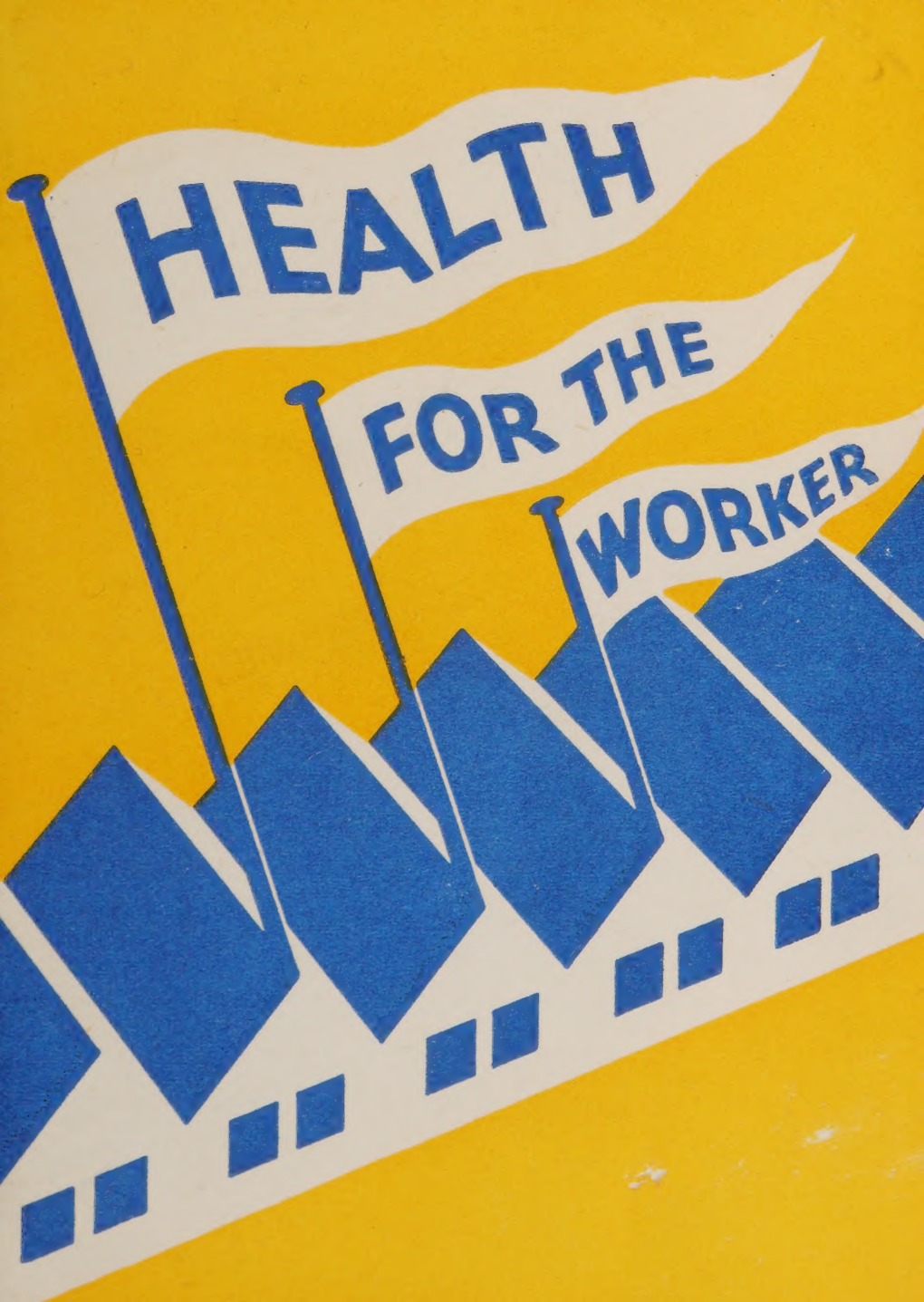
HEALTH
FOR THE
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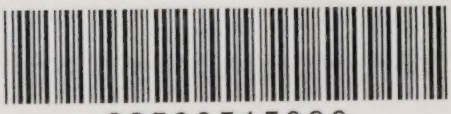
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HEALTH FOR THE WORKER

IF we are going to win the war in the shortest possible time it is not only the men and women in the services that have got to be 'fighting fit'. It is the job of doctors and nurses to attend to the sick and wounded in the Navy, Army and Air Force. It is just as important that doctors and nurses should look after the sick and injured workers in industry. Those who are so ill that they have to stay at home must call in their own family or panel doctor, but many factories now have their medical departments to examine and treat less serious ailments and injuries which, if neglected, might result in many weeks loss of work and loss of pay.

The works doctor or nurse will decide later on whether you should go to your panel doctor.

You have your particular work to do in the factory, and the doctor and nurse have their special duties;

One rule laid down in some factories and not always understood is that the exposed parts (face, hands, arms, etc.) should be thoroughly washed with soap and water before the worker goes home. The reason for this rule is that the skin is capable of absorbing many things that come in contact with it.

The Irritated Skin

In industry the skin is exposed to a large number of substances that irritate it. Some people are more susceptible to such irritation than others, and the skin becomes red, rough and spotty. This condition doctors call *dermatitis*, which, literally, means inflammation of the skin. If your skin becomes inflamed then see your doctor or the works nurse at once. If you wait the dermatitis will get worse, your efficiency will be impaired, and that extra amount of work needed to defeat the enemy will not be done.

The most usual place for dermatitis to appear is on the hands and the arms. One way to avoid this is to be scrupulously clean, and to wash hands and arms thoroughly immediately after work. Keep your finger

nails short. In many industries you may be advised to put a protective ointment on your hands *before* work. Don't neglect this sensible precaution. When you have finished work wash the ointment off with soap and water. Do not use so-called chemical cleansers such as turpentine and thinners, because they may themselves cause dermatitis. And don't use paraffin, pumice stone or benzine. Use soap and water.

If the skin itches it is difficult not to scratch, but scratching only makes both inflammation and itching worse. Not every inflammation of the skin of the industrial worker is due to the work he is doing. For example, there is a common skin complaint called *scabies* due to the burrowing into the skin of a tiny mite. This mite attacks the soft skin, especially between the fingers and the front of the wrists. One of your family may have caught it and have handed it on to you. Early treatment is necessary to clear up this annoying complaint. And if you have it, see that all your family are examined so that they may also be treated if necessary.

A Steady Eye

Any man or woman doing a job of work needs a steady hand and a steady eye. If your eye is inflamed or has a piece of grit in it, it won't see very clearly. If a hot liquid, or a corrosive liquid, or a metal fragment, or a hot spark gets into your eye, you may suffer from it for the rest of your life.

The sailor, the soldier, and the airman have to risk their eyes, so that you and yours may live. If you risk your eyes needlessly, a sailor, or a soldier, or an airman may lose the use of his, because he hasn't got that extra shell, that extra gun, you are making. See that you make use of a screen if it is provided, or wear goggles if you are asked to wear them.

Care Will Kill the Hun

What goes for goggles, also goes for all protective gadgets, caps, boots and clothing. Your job, our job, everyone's job, is to take every reasonable care, so that we can do our best to defeat the worst. And we all

know what the worst is—it's 'that man' and his deluded followers.

Safety devices must be kept in proper order. Any worker who neglects safety devices is putting in danger not only himself, but the man who is doing the fighting.

If you are asked to wear a mask, wear it, and see that it fits.

If you are asked to wear protective clothing, wear it.

If you are asked to wear goggles, wear them.

If you are asked to protect your hands with ointment and washing, put the stuff on and wash it off later.

Hot Air

It may not always be possible to control the temperature and ventilation in your place of work. And some jobs have to be carried out at higher than average temperatures.

The human body works best in a temperature round about 60 deg.F. And it works best if the air is not too moist and if it is kept on the move. Human beings are

warm-blooded animals, and maintain a higher temperature (98.4 deg.F.) than that of the ordinary air round them. This body temperature is produced by the combustion of food in the body. The lungs and the skin provide a big surface from which heat can be given off to the air. Heat is got rid of by the evaporation of water from the skin and the lungs. If the air round you is stagnant, it won't be able to carry off the heat your body is continuously producing. If the air round you is too moist it won't be able to take up so much of the water you are getting rid of through skin and lungs. The result will be that you will feel hot and stuffy, and your efficiency will be lowered. Good ventilation in workrooms is rather an expert business, but workers can help by at any rate not interfering with windows, etc., without authority.

Air Routes for Microbes

Dust and fumes and smells are some of the things the air can carry into your nose and lungs. It can also transport often along with the dust, germs—microbes so small that 25,000 of them could cluster up

comfortably side by side along a line one inch long. A large number of infectious diseases are caused by microbes that travel rapidly by air from one person's nose and throat to another's—diseases like tuberculosis, pneumonia, spotted fever, the common cold. Influenza microbes are smaller still, so small that you can't even see them under the ordinary microscope.

There is one particular human habit that helps these germs to 'go places'—and that is the habit of coughing and sneezing without covering the nose and mouth with a handkerchief, or at least the hand. So wherever you are, **please cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief when you cough and sneeze.**

Take Care of Minor Complaints

Thousands of hours of work are lost yearly in factory, workshop and office because men and women have to stay away from work because of a cold or an attack of 'flu. The common cold is what the doctors politely call a minor malady. You probably call it something else. Other so-called 'minor' conditions that keep people from work are small cuts and abrasions that are

neglected. If neglected they go septic. Or such a thing as a boil is allowed to grow to a ripe old age before anything is done about it. A sprained joint or a strained muscle are allowed to 'go on' too long.

One point about these 'minor' conditions is that they annoy and irritate the person who has them. They hamper his movements. They lower his efficiency. And if neglected they may become 'major' conditions—that is, they may become really serious and even threaten life.

The second point about these 'minor' conditions is that if they are treated as soon as they appear they will clear up quickly and won't develop into 'major' conditions. So please show your cuts and rubs to a doctor or a nurse straight away. Remember that the germs in the air can get into that cut as easily as they can get into the lungs. And remember another thing: one of the best germ killers is soap and water.

If you have a works doctor, or a works nurse, make use of them. The doctor and the nurse are technicians just as you are. Their job is to try to keep

people well, and to assist them when they are sick or injured, no matter how trivial the complaint.

How to Rest

The first essential is to get enough sleep at home; but in these busy times many of us are not able to have all the sleep that would be good for us. There is one way of making up for this, and that is by learning how best to use the rest pauses when at work. During the rest pauses you should sit down, not lean against a wall. If you can put your feet up on anything, so much the better. Relax—deliberately. Let your muscles go loose. You may find that you have been hunching your shoulders up, let them sag down. Let arms and legs and body go slack.

When you are actually working try to get yourself into a position that gives you the least strain. If, for example, you are working at a bench, don't sit on the edge of the chair or stool, with your back looking like a boomerang. Sit well back in your seat, and sit straight. You will work better and feel less tired. Don't slouch.

And Feet

If you have to stand at work, vary your position as much as you can. Now and again put your weight on to your toes, and the outer part of the feet. If you have to bend over your work, every now and then straighten yourself out and have a good stretch. It's the little things like this that help to lessen fatigue. See, too, that your shoes are kept in repair. Women, especially, should take special care of their feet and their shoes. Women—don't go to work in high-heeled shoes. Wear low-heeled shoes, and don't let them get run down at the heels. It spoils your feet, and spoils your balance and poise. A shoe with a pointed toe may look attractive, but it squeezes your toes together and encourages bunions. A broader-toed shoe may not be so pretty, but it is more comfortable, and will save you a lot of trouble from corns and bunions.

But other things besides bad shoes upset the feet. Don't let anyone persuade you that you have a 'fallen arch' and therefore need 'arch supports'. Don't take anybody else's advice. The person who can best advise you is the doctor.

OUTSIDE THE FACTORY

The way you live *outside* the factory is just as important as the way you live *inside* it. Even in wartime the greater part of your life is spent outside your place of work. It is not much use having everything possible done in the factory to promote good health if things at home are not equally satisfactory.

Given certain conditions, health is mainly a matter of attending faithfully to a number of details. You may, perhaps, find none of them very exciting, but regular attention to them is essential to fitness. And fitness is not just a freedom from bodily aches and pains; real health makes you feel it is good to be alive, gives you a zest for work, and interest and enthusiasm in all you do.

In the factory it is the duty of the management to provide for the circulation of fresh air—that is,

for good ventilation. At home it is up to you to see that you have all the fresh air you need, particularly when you are asleep; and blackout need not interfere with this. It is possible to let the air in and to stop the light getting out. Gadgets for this purpose can be bought, or made by yourself if you are of a mechanical turn of mind. Air can get round any corner, but for all practical purposes light travels in straight lines. The all-important thing is to keep the air on the move, and this is automatically brought about when the bedroom has an open fireplace (or a ventilator) and the window is kept open. This subject of a well-ventilated bedroom is more important than some people think. The man or woman who sleeps in a stuffy room runs greater risk of developing colds and sore throats. They bring these to work with them and, by coughing and sneezing, they may start an epidemic which sends their fellow-workers to bed for a week, diminishes factory output and helps the Hun.

Another Route for Microbes

Not every kind of germ can fly through the air; some cannot hop more than the shortest distance, and therefore are able to carry infection only when one body comes into close contact with another. The germs of venereal disease are of this latter kind. War always causes an increase in the number of men and women who become infected with gonorrhœa and syphilis. In this country the increase is not as great as in 1914–18, yet recent figures show a startling rise. Loose living and ignorance are the reasons why these diseases continue to spread. In this country probably not one man in ten or one woman in twenty ever gets venereal disease, but everyone should know the following essential facts about them, so as to be able, if necessary, to advise others. These essential facts are that prompt treatment means earlier cure; that delay in going for treatment may mean serious trouble five or more years later, and that it is equally important to continue treatment until cure is certain. The Medical Officer of Health of your district will provide inquirers (by post or personal call) with

a booklet on the subject and information as to where free advice and, if need be, treatment are to be had.

It may be that you want information about one or two other things that worry you personally. Or you may want advice about what kind of food to eat, about the effect on your health of smoking too much, or not sleeping enough. Take these problems to your doctor. Be frank with him and remember that he is not a judge or jury but a technician like yourself who wants to make sure that the machine works well.

Curwen Press 50M 12.42

Other leaflets are available on

1. CARE OF THE FEET
2. REST AND RELAXATION
3. DYSPEPSIA
4. DIGESTION
5. RHEUMATISM
6. SCABIES AND IMPETIGO
7. COUGHING AND SNEEZING
8. HEALTH FOR THE A.R.P. WORKER

Issued by
THE CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR HEALTH EDUCATION
Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1

CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR HEALTH EDUCATION